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Canning questions answered

HOUSEHOLD CALENDAR

JULY 1932
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

An interview between Miss Ruth Van Deman and Miss Mabel Stienbarger of the Bureau of Home Economics, delivered in the Department of Agriculture period of the National Farm and Home Hour, broadcast by a network of 48 associate NBC stations, Tuesday, May 31, 1932.

MISS VAN DEMAN: How do you do, Everybody?

There are so many home-canning questions coming into the Bureau of Home Economics these days that I have asked Miss Mabel Stienbarger from our food utilization section to come over here with me and answer a few of them on the air. Maybe we'll save you the bother of writing a letter. But we do recommend, with all emphasis, that before you start to can fruits and vegetables at home you obtain a reliable time table and temperature guide. Unfortunately not all time tables in circulation are reliable. If it's worth your while to can the surplus from your garden for use next winter, then it is certainly worth doing it so you have little or no spoilage. Also, of course, you want to preserve all of the fresh flavor and food value possible.

Now, today, we are going to answer questions about canning the early fruits and vegetables. Later in the summer we'll talk about peaches and pears and tomatoes and corn. Right now berries are coming. It's the height of strawberry season in lots of places, and I've seen blackberries and raspberries here in the Washington markets.

Miss Stienbarger, what do you find the best way to can berries so that they won't separate from the sirup and float on top? I suppose this doesn't really effect the quality of the canned fruit, does it?

MISS STEINBARGER: No, when the fruit is turned out of the cans to serve you can't tell whether or not the berries and the sirup were evenly distributed during storage, but most of us want the satisfaction of putting up attractive looking jars. Also, there's a very practical point involved, and that is to get all the fruit possible into each can.

Cooking shrinks berries. Fruit that fills a can when raw shrinks down about one-third or more when sterilized. Therefore, if you want full containers and want to keep the berries from floating, first heat them through with just enough sugar to make them taste good. Add only a very, very small quantity of water, just enough to keep them from scorching. Then pack the hot fruit into the hot containers, seal them up, and process for 5 minutes in a bath of boiling water. Or if you prefer, you can process glass jars of berries in the oven. But seal them only partially, or the steam collecting inside the jar will force the lids off.

Let me add a word of precaution here about the kind of tin cans you get for berries, and cherries, and all other red acid fruits. Get the cans with a special enamel lining called R or sanitary enamel. If these red fruits are put into plain tin cans, there's a harmless chemical reaction that causes the

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fruit to lose its pretty red color. And by the way, the lining of these R or sanitary enamel cans looks like bright gold. Don't confuse them with the enameled cans designated as C. which have a dull gold colored lining, and are used especially for canning foods rich in protein such as chicken and meats and green peas and lima beans.

If you can red fruits in glass, keep the jars in the dark to prevent loss of color. Save the heavy paper cartons the jars come in, and store the canned fruit in them. Or if you keep your canned fruit on shelves in a cool, dry cellar, have a curtain of oil cloth to pull down and shut off the light. In other words, keep all red canned fruits cool and dark.

These directions I've given apply to all berries. As a general thing though we don't recommend canning strawberries. They are much better as jam or preserves. As canned fruit they are rather watery.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Miss Stienbarger, I think you mentioned cherries just in passing. Are they canned in the same way as berries?

MISS STIENBARGER: Yes, cherries even the sweetest kinds, are classed as an acid fruit, and they are processed in the water bath, or the oven, or a steamer without pressure.

MISS VAN DEMAN: While we are still on fruits, Miss Stienbarger, what is your experience in canning them without sugar? Do they keep all right?

MISS STIENBARGER: Yes, indeed, fruits may be canned without sugar for use in special diets or for some particular purpose. Heat the fruit first, simply leaving out the sugar, and pack hot into hot containers, and process in the usual way. If you need more liquid to fill up the cans, use fruit juice. Sometimes you can get this juice from very ripe fruit, too ripe to can whole.

MISS VAN DEMAN: I know you haven't half covered the fruits, but we must be getting on to the early vegetables. What are the main points about asparagus, and peas, and snap beans? How do you recommend canning them?

MISS STIENBARGER: Well, the one thing never to forget in canning asparagus, peas, snap beans, and all the other non-acid vegetables is that they need processing at a higher temperature than that of boiling water. We recommend processing asparagus, and peas and snap beans in the steam pressure canner at 240° F. That is 22° above the temperature of boiling water. The steam pressure method reduces the chances of spoilage. As an economy measure and as a safety measure, we recommend it.

MISS VAN DEMAN: Thank you, Miss Stienbarger, for giving us all these practical pointers on home canning. If anybody wants tables of times and temperatures, and exact directions, just write to the U. S. Bureau of Home Economics. We have a bulletin telling how to can all the usual fruits and vegetables. The supply for free distribution is exhausted just now, but reprint is on the way, and we'll be able to send you copies in two or three weeks.

Now, next week, another old friend of yours will be here with me --- Miss Clarice Scott to talk about clothes for children.

Goodbye, for this time.